

New recycling scheme	The new Better Recycling regime is due to start in June 2026. This is the biggest change in recycling in many years. Mid Suffolk currently only recycles 42% of waste and is not in the top 150 Councils in the UK for recycling. The changes aim to increase recycling rates above the 60% range. The delivery of new bins is underway. Households will receive a new blue recycling bin, plus a food caddy and food recycling bin. The bins in the new system are: • Food waste • Green recycling bin – paper and card • Blue recycling bin – glass, plastics, tetrapaks i.e. non-paper recycling • Black bin – refuse bin The planned schedule will be as follows: <table><tr><th>Collection</th><th>Week 1</th><th>Week 2</th><th>Week 3</th></tr><tr><td>Food Waste</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Refuse general rubbish</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Paper and Card</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Collection	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Food Waste				Refuse general rubbish				Paper and Card				Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons			
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Planning and housing	The incoming government in 2024/25 announced increases in housing targets for Councils, as part of its plan to build more homes. As a result, Mid Suffolk’s housing target has increased from 535 per annum to 734 (an increase of 37%). This amounts to a requirement of over 14,600 new homes for the period from 2024 to 2044, although 5,475 of these are in the current identified supply. As a result of this increased demand, it is vital to create a development plan that meets government targets, to avoid the type of planning free-for-all which the District experienced 5 or 6 years ago. As part of this process the Council carried out a call for sites last year. The published map of all sites submitted during this exercise can be found here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites Please Note: This is not a list of preferred development locations. Publication promotes transparency and ensures communities have early visibility of what has been put forward by landowners. No planning status is granted by submission, and sites do not benefit from any presumption of development. These submissions will next be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria. Further information on the plan stages will follow this year, 2026/27.																				

Council housing	Mid Suffolk's council housing stock requires significant investment to bring it up to standard. Around 15% of Mid Suffolk's Council Housing stock does not meet the Decent Homes standard. This Council administration is planning to invest £19m in our council housing stock this year alone. Mid Suffolk was successful in obtaining a £1.5m government grant to supplement the £2m already committed by the council to install energy saving measures in social housing. This work not only helps lower income households by delivering warm and energy efficient homes, but also lifts tenants out of fuel poverty by helping to save money on energy bills. Work is well underway to tackle the 100 council properties with the lowest energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings by adding a range of improvements, including cavity and loft insulation, new windows, PV panels and air source heat pumps. The Council has also built about 250 new Council houses in the past 3 years. Work is underway to add 16 affordable homes at Paddock House in Eye.
Temporary accommodation	Demand for temporary housing in Mid Suffolk rose by over 100% since 2020. There are currently over 60 households in temporary accommodation in Mid Suffolk. Mid Suffolk District Council proposes to acquire additional temporary accommodation in Mid Suffolk, with up to 30 new units. This is to provide a better standard of accommodation, as well as to save the Council money spent on temporary emergency accommodation.
Stowmarket Innovation Gateway – skills centre	Construction work on a state-of-the-art skills and innovation centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket has now been completed. New clients will be moving in from July 2026 and a set of training courses are about to be launched. The purpose of the centre is to help to address the skills and earnings gap in the district, and to encourage high tech companies to locate here.
Cosy Homes funds energy-efficient homes	The District Council's Cosy Homes initiative helps residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, saving on energy usage and reducing their carbon footprint. The result is homes that are warmer and more economical to heat. The Cosy Homes scheme has been extended to include solar panels as well as insulation measures. Works are carried out for free for residents meeting the eligibility criteria.
Solar for business scheme comes to Mid Suffolk	Businesses can reduce their carbon emissions and save money on energy bills by signing up to have solar panels installed on their premises, for free. Electricity generated by the panels is then sold to the business at a rate lower than their current tariff, helping to cut energy bills and improve their bottom line. Solar for Business has been running successfully in West Suffolk for nine years – helping more than a hundred companies to save a total of around £700,000 and 2,000 tonnes in CO₂ emissions per year. The initiative has now been extended, with businesses across Babergh and Mid Suffolk also able to sign up to the scheme.

Nationally significant infrastructure projects – Pylons, Solar and Water	A number of very large-scale ‘nationally significant infrastructure projects’ (NSIPs) are proposed in our area. Due to their scale, decisions on these projects are taken at government-level, not by the local planning authority. Mid Suffolk District Council has contributed to the statutory planning process for these projects, and has helped communities to share their views: • National Grid proposes 159km of new overhead lines between Norwich to Tilbury, with the route cutting through the Suffolk countryside. National Grid’s plan for more pylons in the Suffolk countryside should be halted, leading councillors from Mid Suffolk District Council told the public hearing (11 February). Mid Suffolk District Council has called for a delay to the project so other options can be considered and costed. They cite concerns about the impact on the environment, communities and businesses. • Mid Suffolk is contributing to the consultations for the EcoPower solar NSIP and the Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage Project, both of which impact Eye Ward. • Mid Suffolk has established a regular drop-in to provide expert support to Parish Councils and residents’ groups on these large-scale projects.
Biodiversity and nature recovery	Mid Suffolk District Council has allocated a budget of £1.8m to support nature recovery. This covers: • Grant funding for communities • Grant funding for river catchment and landscape-scale projects, that can also help to reduce flooding • Habitat creation, management and monitoring on new sites • Pond creation and restoration • Tree planting • Meadow management • Public engagement and awareness / Schools programme Land under Council management is being looked after in ways that enhance biodiversity. This includes creation of meadow areas in parks, whilst still keeping areas of grass mown short for recreation. In Eye Ward, work is being done to improve biodiversity at The Pennings, Oak Crescent play area and Victoria Mill.
New fund for sports in rural areas	A £1.5m fund for Sports provision outside of Stowmarket has been established. The aim is to develop sports infrastructure in a rural areas of Mid Suffolk, by upgrading or extending existing sites, as well as funding new sports provision or facilities.
Support for Highstreets	Mid Suffolk District Council launched a dedicated £1.5m fund to support a thriving Stowmarket high street and town centre area. Funding has been recently agreed for £615k towards the John Peel Centre and £125k for the Community Darts Venue in Stowmarket. Outside of Stowmarket, a new highstreets fund offers grants to highstreet businesses to improve accessibility, appearance, signage and lighting of shop fronts.

	In Eye, Mid Suffolk has worked with a local business to find a suitable location for a new post office and retail store; the post office will begin operations on May 12th The Council has also provided start-up funding to the Eye Love project which highlights the town's highstreet and leisure offerings.
New REACT team tackles litter and other issues	The two-person "respond, enforce and clean team" – or REACT – has been set up to patrol litter hotspot areas in the Mid Suffolk District Council area. The budget for the team has been funded from the council-owned Gateway 14 development. According to the latest figures in Suffolk, there were a total of 4,099 incidents of fly tipping reported in 2023/24. In the area of Mid Suffolk District Council there were 399 reported incidents, with the majority of them being on highways. Having the REACT team means that incidents such as fly tipping can be dealt with more quickly, without taking time and resources from scheduled work. The REACT team has been active in our area, including path clearance in Eye.
Funding for the Food Museum, Stowmarket	The Food Museum is now able to start a £5.5 million project thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Mid Suffolk District Council. The ambitious scope covers conserving and developing three historic buildings - the barn, the factory and the house and linking them together to create a coherent visitor experience. A good museum significantly benefits the District by boosting tourism, enhancing the local economy, fostering community development, and contributing to cultural enrichment.
Mid Suffolk budget for 2026/27	In addition to the day-to-day provision of the current services and activities, the District Council approved a budget for 2026/27 budget with further funding for: • Major changes to food waste collection and better recycling • Enhancements to our current depot in readiness for Better recycling • Further support for recycling education • Cost of living support and Council Tax Support scheme • Support for towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket • Support for sports and leisure facilities in the wider district • Sorting out various long standing property issues in the District • Communities Infrastructure projects • Leisure centre maintenance • Stowmarket sports facilities - SHELF Project • Support for Stowmarket regeneration • Support for the Cosy Homes scheme which has been expanded to offer solar panels • Funding for the Reach Retrofit Hub to be an advice centre for the district • Grant funding for nature recovery and community biodiversity groups • Support for new footpaths and cycle ways • Completing the build of the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway and developing the skills centre • Funding for disabled adaptations and the disability action plan • Expansion of temporary accommodation to avoid homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation and save on costs going to private providers • Support for planning such as the new grant for neighbourhood plans

	Mid Suffolk District Council is increasing Council Tax by 2.99%. About 8% of the overall total Council Tax bill goes to Mid Suffolk District Council, with the remainder going to fund the work of the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner. For context, for a Band D property the increase attributable to Mid Suffolk District Council is about £5.23 per year or 10p per week.
Grants for communities	The District Council continues to provide a wide range of grants to support community groups to carry out the projects they feel are important for their local area. There is more information on the on the grants available, here: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding
Communicating with residents	A regular magazine released in September and February has been introduced to keep residents informed of what is going on in the district. Residents who prefer face-to-face contact with the Council can visit Eye Library on Friday mornings to speak with someone from the Council's team – no appointment is needed. Citizens Advice is also on site at the same time, to assist residents with a wide range of issues including debt, benefits and the cost of living.
Local government reform	Two years ago the government asked councils in 'two tier' areas (areas with both District and County councils) to put forward plans to replace these with single 'unitary' councils. For Suffolk, the government has selected the proposal put forward by the District and Borough Councils. This will see the creation of three unitary councils: • West Suffolk • Central and Eastern Suffolk • Ipswich and Southern Suffolk Here, we will be in the Central and Eastern Council. More details and a map can be found here: https://threecouncilsforsuffolk.org/proposed-council-boundaries/ It is anticipated that the existing District and County Councils will continue operations until 1st April 2028, when the new unitary Councils will take over. There will be elections to the 'shadow' version of the new Councils in May 2027; Councillors elected at this time will work with Council staff to shape the new unitary Councils and get everything ready for them to start operations on 1st April 2028.
Thank you	I would like to thank the Parish Council and all local community groups for their hard work over the past year.

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For updates: www.facebook.com/CllrLucy

Mid Suffolk District Council services: see www.midsuffolk.gov.uk or phone **0300 123 4000**